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ABSTRACT

The winning entries in this bulletin were chosen by the Illinois Association of Teachers of English as representing the best prose and poetry in the state for 1977. The 14 winners in the prose division were chosen from 357 student entries from 67 schools. The prose covers a variety of writing types including fiction, argumentation, and exposition of facts and ideas. The poetry division lists 28 poems chosen from 920 entries. Student names and entry titles for honorable mention in both categories are included. (MAI)

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LATE SPRING 1978

Best Illinois Prose and Poetry of 1977

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ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN

Official Publication of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English

Vol. 65, No. 4 Urbana, Illinois Late Spring, 1978

Preface to the Prose Selections

Unusual though it is that the same school — and some of the same judges — should be reading entries for a second, consecutive year, some of us have just had that experience. Last year, we commented on the encouraging response from all over the state, and on the wide range and variety of the entries. This year, we have observed a substantial increase in the *quantity* of responses — 357 entries from students in grades four through twelve, submitted by 120 teachers in 67 different schools.

But something much more impressive is the significantly higher *quality* of both the thought and the verbal skill exhibited by the authors of many of these entries this year. Choosing the relatively few to be printed here, and those for the Honorable Mention List was difficult, not merely — as it usually is — because of the variety in the types of writing, but primarily because there were a number of very good pieces of writing. It also seems worthy of note that quite a few of these good pieces were argumentation or straight exposition of ideas or facts — the kind of craftsman's prose which is actually much harder to write, and much more useful, than the fantastic or sensational fictions which often appeal to youthful writers as much more fun to write.

We immediately begin to wonder if — and, of course, hope that — this marked improvement in a year's time is evidence that the nationwide emphasis on improvement of writing is producing tangible results. We anticipate continued progress in this direction in future years and look forward to reading even better prose in next year's Spring *Bulletin*.

English Department
Loyola University of Chicago

Judging Committee: Ruth E. McGugan, Chairperson
Randa K. Dubnick
Robert C. Neagle
Nancy Wikarski-Maciekowich
Francis L. Fennell
James E. Rocks

Maxwell Street, Chicago

Everybody from Chicago thinks he knows all about Maxwell Street. Before I went down, I considered myself to be at least as much of an expert as anybody else. After all, didn't I have the proper credentials? I'm Jewish; my ancestors come from a "sthetl" in Russia; my grandmother still owns a department store in the vicinity of Maxwell Street; my Yiddish vocabulary exceeds thirty words; and most importantly, I spent a good portion of my youth in Highland Park, a community that even Skokie begrudgingly admits is the center of Jewish thought and culture in this hemisphere. The fact that I never visited the place until a few weeks ago didn't matter a bit. However, mixed in with my arrogant prejudices were other feelings, ones which made me a little bit unsure and even ashamed. How many times have I heard people refer to Maxwell Street as "Jewtown"? How many times have I heard the word "Jew" used as a verb?

When our car arrived in the general vicinity of the Maxwell Street area, I experienced a feeling of *déjà vu*. The names on the major storefronts were what I had expected: Goldberg's, Walchinsky's and Finestein's. But our destination was a more specific target, beginning on Halsted and ending abruptly one-half block east in a maze of wholesale outlets, junk dealers, and urban renewal projects. This was the real Maxwell Street!

The street itself is lined on both sides from end to end with tables and stalls. This arrangement formed three narrow channels, the central one being the old street itself which was used for the indiscriminate dumping of garbage.

As I approached the first stall with thirty-four words of Yiddish carefully memorized, I felt confident to do business. From within the darkness of the first stall a black face appeared and attempted to hustle me in "jive talk" in which every two sentences rhymed. Had he taken poetry lessons from Muhammad Ali or was it the other way around? The next stall had a variety of used tools with a special on rusty nuts and bolts. Here the proprietors outdid the first character because the rhyme was a duet spiced with a slew of racial slurs:

> Cupee doo and cupee dee
> yo get yo whot ass heh in free!
> En make a deel rott heh wif me!

Since this issue is a "showing" of student writing, the editor has, for the most part, maintained a hands-off policy. Insofar as possible, the selections have been printed exactly as they appeared in submitted form, with minimal editorial change.

At this point I considered my feelings. I was numb; my Yiddish was slipping away quickly. Surely there was some mistake — perhaps a time warp. The third stall was no better. Here the Hawker was selling gawdy cotton carpets with Christian religious themes and beckoned to me in Spanish. Where were the Jews, the old-world types that had existed in my memory or at least my imagination?

The remainder of my walk was filled with similar kinds of experiences. My dress and manner made it very obvious that I was an outsider with enough cash to pay any price for an item. Therefore, when I attempted to bargain for an old mining pick, the seller felt he could reach a much higher price. Dismayed, I took a walk and found myself in front of a kosher-style delicatessen. I went inside, hoping that a pastrami sandwich would clear my head and allow me to make some sense out of this whole thing. A kindly black man, who called himself Nate, gave me a free side order of Kishke. I thanked him, and in our conversation, he indicated that he was the owner and head chef. His specialties included knishes, boiled brisket, and chicken soup. He related to me how he began as a bus-boy over thirty years ago, and because he was bright and willing to learn the trade, he made it his business to absorb all the fine points of running the restaurant. He had also acquired the ability to speak Yiddish as fluently as I heard it at home. He eventually became manager, and, as the neighborhood changed and the Jewish owners made their exodus to some point further north, he bought the place. All of the traditions that he had carefully learned were kept.

As I washed the last of the pastrami down with the first phosphate I had had in years, I began to comprehend the significance of the day. It was now clear that Maxwell Street was the bottom line, the starting point for the poor, the uneducated, the oppressed. You can go into business with six shoelaces for a nickel and if you can sell them for a dime, you're a nickel richer. In many ways it reminded me of the world of professional boxing; the poor have illusions of great wealth. You don't even need to have credentials to put on gloves. And, although less dramatic, you have a business spot if you get there early enough in the morning. Those who have already made it no longer sell on the street.

As for Jewish merchants, some went legitimate and bought stores in the area. Others moved northwards. Most of the original merchants are dead or in old people's homes, while their children have college degrees and live in Highland Park. The grandchildren have

little, if any, knowledge of the past. I returned to the street feeling that I must bring back some prize, some memory of the day, and went directly to the stall where my pick axe was still sitting. The man smirked, knowing that my arrival signalled his triumph. For a moment I imagined my grandfather's face behind that table.

ANDY SPIWAK, *twelfth*
Evanston Township High School
Sydney Lieberman, teacher

Insights

He was drunk that day, dead drunk and everyone knew it. We said nothing, of course, pretending it was otherwise — that he had overslept or that his car had broken down — but he was drunk. And the truth and the pretensions crowded the air and hollowed our laughter.

We did our jobs — once, twice — until there was nothing left to do. Then we sat and waited, doodling and chattering and listening for the door to open.

"I don't know what your father's going to do," she said.

I looked up. My cousin had pulled her chair close to mine and was facing me, talking tight-lipped and low as if we were conspirators. I said nothing. Not that it mattered; she talked on and never noticed.

"He works day and night as it is. He can't depend on Al. After all your father does for him, you'd think he'd stay sober today." She pulled an ashtray toward her and flicked her cigarette. "It's the last Sunday before we close, and Rudy needs him."

He can't just "stay sober," my mind shouted, not now. It's too late for that. He was sober at Uncle Tony's funeral in May, so sober that the whole pew shook when he leaned on it and he almost had a convulsion. He was steadier when he returned with whiskey on his breath.

There was a scuffling, then, and voices. The door opened, and a family filed inside. I pushed back my chair and stood up.

"Don't seat them in Charlotte's station," my father said. He turned to my cousin. "You can tend bar for ten or fifteen minutes, can't you, just until Fritz gets here at noon?"

I left to seat them, and when I returned she was sudsing and rinsing bar glasses.

"He's coming," she said, looking out the block windows to her right, "and he's drunk."

I sat down quickly and began to doodle in the book where I list the names of waiting customers. Then, as I heard his uneven shuffle on the stairs, I began to study the ink-blue lines intently. My father bent down, counting the towels in the cabinet beneath the back bar. A waitress shoved a drink order toward Charlotte. She dried her hands, and we heard the door open.

I turned. "Hi, Uncle Al."

He was stooped over, his hair hanging in greasy clumps across his forehead. His shirt hung out in the back. His pants were dirty, and his tie hung frayed and limp around his neck. He kept feeling for his back pocket, finally dropping his keys on the counter behind the bar. He jerked his head up sharply in recognition. "Rosemary," he said, his response barely intelligible.

He passed Charlotte, but she pressed her lips tighter and said nothing. When he stopped, his shadow fell across the picture behind the bar. It is an old black-and-white framed print of my grandparents and their four children. He was twenty years younger then, tall and thin. I thought how bloated he was now and how yellow his skin seemed to be. He had changed so gradually that it was hard to remember him any different from what he was that day.

He reached upward, and half-straightening, flicked on the T.V. He turned the volume knob, and the last few minutes of the *Lone Ranger* assaulted the silence.

"Go home, Al," my father said.

He paid no attention, taking a glass from the shelf and trying to scoop up some ice from the sink.

Charlotte began to mix drinks.

His hands shook so badly that he couldn't keep the ice in his glass.

Charlotte mixed faster, dropping ice, pouring liquor, spearing olives and cherries, and laying lime slices over the edges of the glasses. She reached over, dropped ice into his glass, and slammed it onto the bar in front of him.

He turned away, leaning with one hand on the bar and one on the counter behind. He was more stooped than before, and his head nodded up and down as if he were fighting sleep.

"Go home, Al," my father said again. "You're in no shape to work. Charlotte can handle it."

He looked up and over toward Charlotte, and I knew he'd leave. I had always known that he must have been unhappy, but until I saw him that day, I never realized the difference between knowing and understanding. He just watched her for a moment; then he

sagged a little and, without saying a word, expressed despair, helplessness, and acceptance of what he had become. There was an attitude of shame or regret about him too, an attitude of being concerned. There are those who would debate whether he brought it all upon himself or whether society and human nature are to blame. I passed no judgment, then, nor do I now. What I think I saw was a self-hatred and a sense of waste. For the first time, I not only knew what a person felt, but I also understood, as much as anyone else can ever understand.

He turned to leave, missing the doorway by a foot and slamming into the wall.

"Damn," I said, and my eyes filled with tears.

I have had other "insights" this summer — about myself and my family — some that philosophers would find more important, but none that affected me as deeply as this.

Two weeks later, my father came home from visiting Uncle Al at the hospital.

"How is he?" I asked.

My father was almost in tears. "They have him tied down. His eyes are grey. He doesn't know anyone. I said, 'Al, you're in the hospital.' And he said, 'I'll mix your martini in a minute.' "

The next day he was dead.

He was still young, they said. Perhaps. I know that people learn to live with an awful lot, but I don't think I would want to live with what Al accepted that Sunday morning.

ROSEMARY KEGL, *twelfth*
Lyons Township High School, LaGrange
David Briggs, teacher

The City of Plague: Camus' Existentialist Reality

Albert Camus, the winner of the Nobel prize for literature in 1957, is unquestionably one of the most important philosophical writers of the twentieth century. He addresses himself primarily to the conflict between man's natural longing for an ordered and just world and the indifferent anarchy of the universe, which he terms "the absurd." Camus contends that the only valid response to this fundamental tragedy of the human condition is humanist revolt, meaning rebellion against injustice, whether human or universal, with the humility derived from awareness of the ultimate futility of all man's endeavors. *The Plague*, Camus' second major novel, is a brilliant allegorical vehicle for these philosophical pon-

derings. The novel's most important and poignant symbol is the plague itself, which represents the absurd. Accordingly, the ways in which the major characters respond to the plague are metaphorical representations of Camus' conceptions of the possible philosophical responses to the absurd. The work is also greatly enhanced by Camus' pliant writing style which alternates among philosophical abstractions, vivid, meticulous descriptions, and rebellious ironies. With this remarkable blend of metaphor and stylistic flexibility, Camus creates a superb allegorical vehicle.

The novel is made an effective allegory by the fact that the plague is a true manifestation of the absurd on a collective level. According to Camus, the absurd results from the conflict between man's knowledge of his own mortality and his desire for eternity.[1] Camus maintains that the only way one can successfully revolt against absurdity is to live for the present and revel in one's spiritual and physical humanness instead of finding value in an unfulfilling life which might appear to offer security for the future. He employs this metaphor in his novel *The Stranger* in which the protagonist is a condemned man who attains self-fulfillment while awaiting his execution.[2] In truth, however, all men are condemned to death. Thus the plague is a manifestation of the absurdity of life, which is death, on a mass scale. In other words, it is a collective death sentence.[3] As Camus writes, "What does that mean — plague? Just life, no more than that."[4]

The plague also symbolizes the absurd in the alienating effect it has on man in society. Consciousness of the absurd makes all men exiles in the sense that anyone aware of the ultimate meaninglessness of society's arbitrary order cannot participate in it. Thus the exile or the stranger is an allegorical character pervasive in Camus' writing. Since the plague is a manifestation of the absurd on a collective scale, however, it exiles the entire city that it infests. This state of collective exile is portrayed allegorically as the city is quarantined and its citizens isolated from lovers, friends, and the rest of human society. The narrator of the novel, Dr. Rieux, dwells on the sorrows of this isolation at great length, describing the feeling of exile as "that sensation of a void within us that never left us" and commenting that "the first thing that the plague brought to our town was exile."[5]

The plague is also absurd in that it is totally arbitrary and unjustifiable and simply cannot be reconciled to man's desire for order and justice. It takes its victims at random and, as the absurd, it equalizes all men, regardless of the distinctions society places on

them. Camus accentuates the plague's arbitrary injustice through the character of Rambert, a Parisian journalist who is trapped in Oram because he happened to be there on an assignment at the time the city was quarantined. At first Rambert demands to be exempted from the quarantine on the grounds that his presence in Oran is "purely accidental."[6] Later, however, he accepts the counsel of Rieux, who tells him, "I know it's an absurd situation, but we're all involved in it and we've got to accept it as it is,"[7] and joins one of the city's volunteer relief squads in trying to eradicate the plague. The author further illustrates the injustice of the plague in an agonizingly poignant scene narrating the slow, painful death of an innocent child,[8] which he refers to as "a grotesque parody of crucifixion."[9]

The symbol of the plague itself, however, is only a part of Camus' allegorical structure. The different manners in which the novel's major characters react to the plague also represent the possible philosophical responses to the absurd. This allegorical mode is introduced at the outset of the book through the scene depicting a meeting of the city medical council. The three medical attitudes expressed at this meeting represent the three important philosophical reactions to the absurd which Camus discusses in his essay "The Rebel." Dr. Rieux, of course, represents the existentialist viewpoint. He accepts the existence of the problem and demands immediate action to relieve human suffering. Dr. Richard, on the other hand, is an embodiment of Camus' conception of Marxism. He insists that only time (i.e., history) can justify the legitimacy of action and, fearing overreaction and public panic, cautions the medical council to wait before acting against the plague. Dr. Castel symbolizes the Nietzschean response, which Camus contends entails the recognition of evil but also the acceptance of its inevitability.[10] It is through these and the many other allegorical characterizations that he develops throughout the novel, that Camus presents to his readers his judgment of the different responses to the absurd philosophical predicament he has established through the symbol of the plague.

Camus saw the religious answer to the absurd as benign or self-denying acceptance. This attitude is embodied by Father Paneloux, a renowned priest and theologian. In the early days of the plague Paneloux preaches that the epidemic is God's vengeance for the sins of the townspeople.[11] After he witnesses the horrifying death of the child, however, Paneloux's certainty is shattered. He preaches another sermon, this time admitting that the justice of the plague is incomprehensible to man but taking the philosophically unjusti-

fiable step of accepting and loving it as God's will. In the end Paneloux commits a kind of suicide (which Camus believes is a philosophical betrayal of humanity)[12] by refusing medical aid when he is striken with plague. By contrasting the unjustifiable horror of the plague, as shown through the child's death, with Paneloux's blind acceptance and faith in God's truth, Camus effectively indicts Christianity as a betrayal of humanity.

As stated earlier, the existentialist response to the absurd is humanist revolt. The major characters of the novel undertake such a rebellion in their respective relief efforts. Each is sincerely committed to attempting to alleviate human suffering without the philosophical ostentatiousness that Camus believes makes such endeavors hypocritical. Rieux sums up this sense of determined humility when he says, "Salvation is too big a word for me. I don't aim so high. I'm concerned with man's health; and for me his health comes first."[13] Camus also holds that existential revolt releases man from his state of exile and allows him to experience true human solidarity. This concept is expressed through Rieux's friendship with Tarrou and through Rambert's decision to remain in Oran to fight the plague even after he is presented with an opportunity to leave the city illegally. Rambert justifies his action to Rieux by claiming that if he left he would shame his lover in Paris. When Rieux replies that there is no shame in choosing happiness (over self-sacrificing revolt), Rambert counters that it is "shameful to be happy by oneself."[14] *The Plague* is a didactic vehicle,[15] and it is through these characters that Camus allegorically demonstrates the proper response to the absurd.

The novel is more, however, than a didactic philosophical allegory. It is also an extremely well-written piece of fiction, and Camus' writing style makes the book a tremendously poignant expression of his philosophy. One reason is that, unlike many other philosophical writers, Albert Camus is a master of poetic description. In a scene in which Rieux and Tarrou take a respite from the plague-stricken city and go for a night swim in the ocean, Camus writes:

> Once they were on the pier they saw the sea spread out before them, a gently heaving expanse of deep-piled velvet, supple and sleek as a creature of the wild. . . . Slowly the waters rose and sank, and with their tranquil breathing sudden oily glints formed and flickered over the surface in a haze of broken lights.[16]

Such vivid imagery imparts to the novel a sense of drama and life not often found in philosophical literature.

Camus also displays a meticulous eye for humorous detail in

describing the absurd daily routines of some of the townspeople, a practice in accordance with his contention that all of man's actions are equally insignificant. His affectionate descriptions of even the most ridiculous human idiosyncrasies, through such characters as an old man who spends all of his time transferring peas from one bowl to another, and another elderly gentleman who regularly enjoys spitting at cats from his balcony, embody a profound, loving humanism and lend comedy and warmth to the novel.

Camus further uses his style to rebel against the philosophically abstract conception of human suffering, which he considers a betrayal of human brotherhood. Camus suggests the insensitivity of Dr. Richard's abstract (Marxist) attitude towards the plague by describing an extremely grotesque scene in indifferent, abstract terms.[17] Immediately after Rieux leaves the medical council meeting he has a terrifying encounter:

> As he was driving down a back street redolent of fish and urine, a woman screaming in agony, her groin dripping blood, stretched out her arms toward him.[18]

The indifferent tone of this passage voices ironically Camus' rejection of philosophical abstraction of human suffering.

In *The Plague*, Albert Camus presents his vision of humanist rebellion as an answer to the absurd human condition through the symbolism of the plague and the different characters' responses to it. The novel's literary value and allegorical effectiveness are also both greatly enhanced by Camus' flexible writing style, as the emotionalism that he creates stylistically involves the reader with the philosophical questions of the work on a profoundly personal plane. It is through this combination of symbolism and stylistic pliability that Camus creates a poignant allegorical vehicle for his philosophical odyssey through the existential themes of the absurd, exile, and revolt.

JOSEPH LEASE, *eleventh*
Evanston Township High School
John Reque, teacher

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Ras Muhammed

In the desert of southern Sinai, we drove for the greater part of a week's stay. The parched breeze that struggled its way through the open windows of the slow moving truck was a breeze, nevertheless, and unanimously preferred to day-time hiking in the torrid landscape.

The heat of Sinai was intense, but not unbearable. We commonly relate the humid, sultry variety of heat to discomfort. Sinai heat, however, was endlessly dry and would absorb water at an astonishing rate. It was a wily heat that drained water from a man's system without his slightest awareness. Thus were we warned to replenish our bodies with the water lost: two and a half gallons daily. Although we had canteens filled and ready for this purpose, the water therein quickly warmed to a temperature uncomfortable for drinking. Rather than use this water, we made numerous stops along our route to purchase chilled Cokes.

Scattered all about in the desolation were but two proofs for the existence of western man: the roads and the soda stands. The typical soda stand consisted of scrap wood assembled into a shabby hut, on some unknown road, in the middle of nowhere, by some enterprising Bedouin. To complete this shack, beverages, bottle racks, and an outdated refrigerator complete with generator were supplied. Despite the unique geographical location of these soft-drink stands, I have heard that the Bedouin shack-owners are financially successful. Whenever our bus would stop before such a stand, we all would flock to its salesman, money eagerly in hand;

anyone who has never visited a desert before could not appreciate an ice-cold Coca-Cola as much.

Our trek through South Sinai was begun after a four-week tour of Israel. We began our journey on the only paved road of the peninsula, leading down from Eilat and following the curve of the coast to the West. The lower portion of this peninsula was comprised of bleak, majestic piles of granite slabs and fragments rising high into the air.

Life was indeed sparse here. A few thousand Bedouins represented the civilized forces; the camel, their domesticated servant. Plants could sometimes be seen groping for life among the baked rocks. In comparison, the number of wild animals counted far less to the eye. One evening, on the beaches along the Red Sea, I noticed a singularly large beetle. I had the impression that this was the only wild thing in the desert for miles around. After the group-leader's wife smote the insect with a lethal, hand-held slipper, one could not help but wonder whether this would be the last beetle ever to inhabit these beach sands.

This despondent desert was truly forsaken, yet I would not call it God-forsaken, and Ras Muhammed at the southern-most tip of Sinai supports this claim. There, under the pure, deep marine blue of the Red Sea, lie some of the finest reef constructions in the world, and off Ras Muhammed, the epitome of the Red Sea reefs can be found. In early morning, our bus started out for Ras Muhammed. After hours of agonizing, off-the-road driving, we finally reached sight of our goal. When the truck stopped, we hurriedly put on our skin-diving gear and entered the very small, finger-like inlet which led to the reef. Under the searing sun, the water was actually hot to the flesh and was enshrouded in a white mist of protozoa and diatoms. All one could see was the sandy bottom immediately below him; it was overgrown with random patches of sea-flora and the water never exceeded a depth of three feet. The longer I swam, the greater became my apprehension of what might lie ahead.

Near the opening of the inlet, the haze gradually dispersed, revealing to me the onset of reef formations in the shallow water. As the water clarified to a transparent crystal-blue, fish materialized before my eyes, fish all about me, in bursts of unremitted color. Angelfish with the rainbow captured among their scales, surgeonfish and triggerfish with their stunning delineations of hue, parrotfish as long as three feet, their teeth fused into a rigid beak for feeding on coral polyps: all these fish surrounded me, pleading

with me to venture further in this watery realm. I progressed slowly and carefully in the coral-laden shallows, and when I attained the position of the first swimmers of the group, I saw the boundless Red Sea spread out before me, and against my back, a vast cliff dropped down. This cliff was a formidable wall of coral-lime breached, on its side, with various crevices and caves. Wherever the eye turned, bright red, yellow and blue corals protruded from the precipice, and if one looked down from the edge of the cliff, all the different strata of oceanic life could be viewed through the depths. Light rays diffused through the water a distance of two hundred feet, like a draped veil. The metallic scales on fishes shimmered with this light, darting along with fish schools that could be seen at different layers.

Far too short a time had been spent admiring the Red Sea's splendor, when our group was called back to the barren, sunburnt shore. Upon return, we boarded the bus, so that we might again continue our lethargic journey on those endless Sinai roads. . . .

Long since my arrival back home, I recognized the supreme marvel of my Mideastern experience lay not in the beauty of Ras Muhammed nor in the austerity of the Sinai desert alone, but rather, in the ultimate paradox between the desert and the reef: a world so dead near a world teeming with life. In Israel, I had seen what grand things God did for the history of mankind. In Sinai, was dynamically revealed His miracle of life thriving in the midst of a stricken world.

KIM GOLDBLATT, *eleventh*
Glenbrook South High School, Glenview
Mary Mulligan, teacher

My Foil: The Bus Stop Girl

I am a bit amused with myself for creating a personality for a girl whose name I don't even know. I noticed her a little more each day and grew more intrigued as I found out things about her.

I first saw her when she got on the bus. I mean every day. She got on all by herself at a stop in the middle of this street full of warehouses and factories. The funny thing was that all through the residential area of north Evanston, the stops were mobbed, and when the bus turned a corner and came barreling down that hill into the more industrial area, there stood this little girl all alone in front of the Permalawn warehouse. She's very lucky to have that stop to herself, because the bus is always so crowded that the

driver has to pass by several well populated stops because all the people simply wouldn't fit in. He always stops for her though, because she's only one body, and a small one at that.

When I say small, I mean in stature, not in age. I would guess that she is a sophomore or junior at Evanston High School. She is about 5'1" and has a petite figure in proportion to her height. I was intrigued by her size, and her face. She was so different from me with her fine features and long, wavy black hair. Her looks led me to create two roles that she might fit into: one of those cute little girls who flirt outrageously and play little games, or a sophisticated Cleopatra-type with those dark eyes. I am a fairly straightforward person, and these two flirtatious and daring roles were fun to imagine for someone else.

I was pleased to discover that the girl was on makeup crew for YAMO, the annual student-directed show that I was singing in. I figured I'd get a chance to see if either of my guesses was near the truth. The first thing to help me decide was that, by and large, the makeup crew was made up of YAMO groupies, that is, those who want the prestige of being involved, and a way to get into the parties. My girl seemed to fit right into this crowd. After seeing her riding around on some guy's shoulders several different nights (on several different guys), giggling and slipping off, I concluded that she came close to the first of the two possible roles, that of the cute little flirt.

The giggling, flirting, and being tossed around is what fascinated me about this girl. I don't look down upon these actions, but they're really foreign to me. With my 5'9" frame, I am not the type to be tossed around. Nor do I feel comfortable flirting and giggling excessively. But I found it interesting to watch the little girl who could carry it off. My bus stop girl is, as far as I can determine, a true contrast to me and my ways, and therefore a joy for me to watch.

SARAH STOCKWELL, *twelfth*
Evanston Township High School
Curtis Crotty, teacher

The Wheel

The sodden sky dripped on the city, pulling the mud-colored leaves of a warm, wet autumn off the trees. The steady drizzle streaked the smog-painted buildings and puddled in the saturated dust. All passers-by had gone with the day, and the only man visible

in the late afternoon stood at a window three stories above the street. Inside the laboratory where he worked, the rain was only a patter, as of idle fingers tapping on the roof, for the light was bright and harsh and the smell of rain was excluded by alcohol, formaldehyde, and hints of animals and death and the oversights of a careless janitor.

One wall was lined with cages tenanted by innumerable rodents, all running. They ran on exercise wheels, filling the room with incessant clicking as the wheels tallied revolutions and dropped seed-rewards. A cage stood on the table by the window. The lab assistant filled his syringe, and one practiced hand caught the running, furry body from its wheel. Mechanically he went through the steps one last time.

Returned to its cage, the mouse resumed its run, while the assistant, finished with his daily tasks at last, stood watching. Tomorrow . . . tomorrow he must take the constant inventory . . . but first, of course, he'd measure and inject the mice. The records needed checking, and all the instruments had to be calibrated, day after day. Maybe he'd have time to mix the chemicals; they were running out. . . . That mouse ran like a dog in a dream of squirrels with a motionless body and pendulum legs.

Just so had the dogs run, dreaming of hunting, in his college days; their heads wired, lying on their sides with feet endlessly moving. He and his professor had poured over those canine dreams, late at night, sleepless with excitement over new progress or little discoveries, ecstatic triumphs in which no one lost.

Half-smiling with his memories, the assistant lifted up the charts on which he daily recorded the measurements of five hundred mice. For many minutes he studied them, but when, finally, he raised his head, the papers slipped from his fingers and he looked pleadingly at the mouse. "I don't even know what they're trying to learn!" he whispered. "Ten years . . . don't even know the words."

Ten years. . . . Vividly he remembered the day, ten years ago, when he had come here, desperate for a job to feed him until better posts came his way. He had brought exuberant optimism to this room, to mice, to rows of dirty glassware, to bottles awaiting contents, to reams of paper awaiting charts. With such profound contempt he had drudged through the trivial experiments, waiting for a summons. The months had passed, and one by one his applications had come back, rejected. So he had stayed, while one experiment gave place to another, much the same to him, bringing only new charts and altered smells. . . . His dreams of discoveries hadn't

taken long to sour and flee, and then he trudged his round in numb oblivion, leading a quiet life of mottled grey.

His eye fell on the running mouse; he smiled faintly. "Poor mouse," he whispered sympathetically, and his finger slipped the latch on the cage door. He willed it to escape, but the mouse hesitated in fear before venturing timidly forth. As the mouse ranged farther afield, its liberator followed eagerly, impatient at its slow exploration. Finally satisfied as it confidently neared the door, he straightened; laughing triumphantly, he skipped giddily about the room until the table checked him.

Slowly his laughter subsided, but he still smiled his triumph at the view outside. He would resign and study — maybe even go back to college — to catch up on his field, on ten years of new knowledge. Then, an important post, maybe a partnership, or his own lab. . . .

A movement at his elbow broke his reverie. It was the mouse running on its wheel. Hungry, it had returned to the wheel and the seeds it brought. In the grey silence he regarded it. His right hand slid over to the syringe again, and the left closed on a dusty bottle on a back shelf. Slowly he drew a little liquid into the syringe. "One c.c. is sure to do," he told the mouse in a vibrant whisper. Then his hand closed on the little body, and he repeated the operation he had performed so many times before.

The mouse ran on until it died. He watched it all the while. At the end, as the pendulum legs faltered and the momentum of the wheel tossed the little corpse, he filled the syringe again, past 10 c.c., past 20 — full. . . .

The wheels continued clicking but produced no seeds. The mice in the room ran on long after the seeds ran out, and the pattering feet kept time with the rain.

CARRIE FORDHAM, *eleventh*
Lyons Township High School, LaGrange
Aldo Mungai, teacher

Mirror of Time

There weren't many people out that day because of the blistering sun. It burned Phil's back. He looked around the neighborhood. It wasn't much different from any other Chicago suburb. There was a park at the end of the street and adjacent to that was a carry-out restaurant where most of the kids probably were. He could just

see them drinking ice-cold Cokes as they swapped jokes and told stories.

He would love to be there, but if he wanted to make the team he was going to have to practice. He grabbed the basketball and got ready to shoot a free throw.

Suddenly he felt someone was watching him. He turned and saw an old man standing behind him. The man was wearing a brown suit and tie with brown shoes. He looked at the man and the man looked back. The man smiled at Phil. The man winked and disappeared. Phil quietly fainted.

Phil made the basketball team and later became a college star at Yale University. He was offered a position on the Chicago Bulls but he turned them down so that he could pursue his education. He got a doctoral degree in electronics, trigonometry and physics. He got a grant from Philips Petroleum to work on a new process of electricity. A new chemical which he had discovered when charged could do some strange things.

When attached to the brain and charged with negative charges it could take you back through time. The only trouble was you had no control over it. You never knew where or when you would go; usually the passage involved events from the memory, and you could only stay in one spot for forty seconds.

One day Dr. Philip Morris decided to try his machine and take notes on his findings. His assistant plugged in his brain and turned on the machine. Suddenly he saw scenes flashing by him. They started to slow down and finally stopped on a hot sunny day in the middle of some peaceful neighborhood. He was standing on a sidewalk in front of a small house. The house was typical of all houses of that time, one main house with a garage and a front porch attached. On the driveway he saw a boy playing basketball. The boy turned and stared at him and he stared back.

He smiled at the boy and then winked. His time ran out and the scenes started to reverse and he disappeared. As the scene began to wheel by he caught, out of the corner of his eye, the scene of the deserted street and the boy fainting.

The scene seemed vaguely familiar to him but he just couldn't place it. He pondered over the event for a few days and finally dismissed it as *déjà vu.*

ED FERGUSON, *eighth*
Miner Junior High School, Arlington Heights
Pamela Karnatz, teacher

My Dog: Mutt Extraordinary

My dog, Lady, is the best dog a person could have. She has a nose like a bloodhound's, she runs like a greyhound, and is as hardy as a husky. She is white with black spots.

Lady and I have lots of fun together. In the summer, Lady and I play tug-of-war with a thick rope. I always let her win because, if I don't, I get chewed on.

Sometimes we catch Lady snatching corn from our garden. She shucks the corn, then eats it.

I taught Lady to jump through my hula hoop for a piece of cheese or bologne.

When she is stalking an animal, and I walk out the door and scare the animal away, she looks very disgusted. When she looks at me, I can almost hear her thinking, "Dummy!"

Once when we came back from shopping, we found our neighbors in our backyard in a semi-circle around Lady who had cornered a woodchuck. The neighbors were yelling, Lady was barking, and the woodchuch was hissing. I had to lock Lady in the garage till the woodchuck went away. That ruined her whole day!

In the fall we made cornstalk teepees in our garden. We tied them together with rope, but the morning glories soon took over and held them together. Lady kept careful watch over the pumpkin patch from the inside of the teepees. Lady was attacked from all sides by weeds and grasshoppers.

When the snow tickles Lady's belly, I go out and make trails for Lady to follow. When she gets bored with following my trails, I follow hers.

To keep Lady warm, we fill up her doghouse with straw which she drags all over the place, and we track it into the house when we come in. My mother yells and says that our house looks like a stable.

When it's cold in the winter, we give Lady warm scraps of food. We found out that Lady likes anything but spinach. (I don't blame her.) Sometimes when my mother makes a lot of noise fixing dinner, Lady hears my mom and jumps up on the kitchen window and scares my mother half to death. She calls Lady a black-masked bandit when she does that.

When the baby animals are born in spring, Lady's hunting season begins. She chases baby birds, squirrels, and rabbits, sometimes catching them.

Last spring when it was muddy from the heavy rains, my father taught Lady to jump up on the doghouse because she got people

muddy when she jumped on them. Now when she jumps up on the doghouse, she knows she'll get petted.

That's why my dog Lady is the best dog a person could have.

WENDY BALMER, *fifth*
Churchill School, Glen Ellyn
Pat MacWhorter, teacher

Cold Fighter

"Hello. Joe?"

"Ya."

"Come on, man. Get up. It's snowing bad."

"Ya. All right. I'm comin'."

His hand groped in the dark and tried to put the phone back on the hook. He knocked over his half can of uncarbonated beer and a package of mentho-lyptus cough drops that were hanging over the table edge. Joe muttered under his breath, then fell back into bed. His mind was contemplating whether or not to get up. He also wondered why he had picked last night to watch Johnny Carson and "The Tonight Show." After what seemed like a few seconds of extra sleep, Joe exerted his willpower and slowly stood up. It was 2:30 a.m.

Outside it was dark. Only a few dimly lit porch lights and the streetlight on the corner told the story. A blizzard had paralyzed the city.

Joe threw the empty beer can into the bathroom wastebasket and looked at himself in the mirror. He decided to skip taking a shower since it wouldn't matter anyway. His rusty-brown hair was matted except for the rooster head curls on top. Whiskers from a three-day growth of beard added to his scraggliness.

Joe grabbed some cold pizza from the fridge, chomped on it briefly for some quick energy, then flipped the radio on.

"... Chicago is experiencing wind gusts of up to 40 miles per hour...."

Joe slipped on a tee shirt and long thermal underwear.

"The local weather picture calls for...."

He forced his way into three pairs of socks and two pairs of dirty blue jeans.

"... that's minus 20 on the Celsius scale."

Next came a short-sleeved gray sweat shirt, followed by two long-sleeved ones.

"... a wind chill factor of 56 below ..."

He struggled into a hooded jacket and a long black trench coat.

"City officials urge everyone to stay inside unless travel is absolutely necessary. The roads are snow-covered, slick, and extremely hazardous. Many routes are already impassable."

Two wool hats, a scarf, and dark, black, thief-type gloves finished the job. He looked and felt like a robot.

"This will also make it easier for our snow crews to clear the streets . . ."

With much restricted movement, Joe turned off the radio and the lights, grasped his goggles and stepped into the garage. In the darkness, Joe tripped over a trash can lid, an old garden hose, and the lawn furniture. An icy blast slapped his face as he lifted the heavy garage door. After hoisting himself clumsily into the seat, he turned the key on his snow-plow equipped dump truck.

It roared like a bear.

STEVE SYNOVITZ, *twelfth*
Macomb Senior High School
Rosemary Randolph, teacher

I Am Thankful

I am thankful for little things . . . my little sister with a dimple in her cheek, books to read, meatballs and long spaghetti, watching a snowflake melt on my mitten, the first tulip of spring, red apples on my tree, and a Christmas stocking stuffed with surprises.

I am thankful for soft and warm things . . . a cozy bed to snuggle down in, my kitten Becky with black shiny fur, marshmallows in hot chocolate, a thick terry towel after a bath, a sandy beach to build castles on, and a warm hat and scarf on a snowy winter day.

I am thankful for living things . . . my teacher who helps me pronounce new words, neighbors who feed Becky while I'm on vacation, tall pine trees to play dolls under, and my dogs Huck and Benji who *always* understand me.

I am thankful for things I can't see . . . clean air to breathe, a phone call with Grandma, a bird's chirpy song, a cool breeze, and getting over pneumonia.

I am thankful for big things . . . my father who helps me with my arithmetic, my mother who takes time to listen to me, my sister Natalie who loves me, a warm home, and good health.

I am thankful to God who gives me these things.

MILLICENT LYNN BLIESENER, *fourth*
Northbrook School, Mendota
Shirley Roloff, teacher

The Day I Climbed the Pyramid of the Sun

"Guess what it says here?" asked the lady with the guidebook. She belonged with the man in the flowered shirt. "It says that the royal Aztecan priests performed their most sacred rites on top of the Pyramid of the Sun. The human victims and the priests would begin their ascent at the peak of the day's sunlight."

I gazed upward through my lashes at the pounding sun. The time was absolutely right. "Why, they would plunge a knife into the victim's heart," the lady's next words were electrifying, "and they would place the heart in a bowl while it was still beating and hold it up to nourish the Sun God. How uncivilized!"

"Maybe later on, if it cools off, we'll all climb one of the pyramids," my mother told me. She won't let me climb the *one*. There the priests are preparing their tools, a gold knife and a jewel inlaid bowl. I thought that, but I did not say it. "After we eat, maybe we can all take a guided tour." That was the last thing I wanted. I wanted to do it all by myself.

"A guided tour is a waste of money," complained the sweaty man in the flowered shirt. "Trust Mexicans to know what to charge Americanos. Phew. Is it ever boiling."

The noon sun was indeed strong. My mother and her friends looked thirsty. Mongrel dogs slept in the sparse shade. Mexican trinket-vendors had settled down to their siestas. No one was climbing any of the pyramids of Tenochtitlan because of the sweltering heat.

"You, little missy, must nap. Back to the hotel, now." That was my mother's voice. She pointed the way.

Rising out of the lesser pyramids to lesser gods was my pyramid. It was huge and perfectly symmetrical, greyish red in the reflected rays of its master. It beckoned me to the test. The grownups had decided to view the artifacts in the cool museum nearby. I saw my chance. Lost in the confusion of the walk to the museum, I slipped away unnoticed. I intended to prove my courage. I could not surrender to the awesome power of the Sun God as the others were doing.

Armed with my only defense, an aluminum Girl Scout canteen filled with water, I made a resolute beginning. In the first series, the steps were long, broad, and distanced far away from each other. "On these steps the people stand watching the fatal climb." I wiped my perspiring forehead and continued, my short legs reaching out to the next step, and to the next. These wide steps continued about

a fifth of the way up. They narrowed at an entrance to a tomb. But this ornately carved opening was insignificant. "In the greatest and largest pyramid, the Pyramid of the Sun, the real entrance-way is hidden." I steadied myself, took a deep breath, and made my way carefully around the sharply angled path on the side of the fake entrance. I was tired and panting, and my legs felt weak. My chest heaved as I coughed and choked on the dust. I lifted my head slowly upward. The afternoon sun was as hot as ever, but the summit of the pyramid scattered the rays into gold bands of light. The remaining steps were so narrow that I had to walk with measured caution. I felt the force of the sun penetrate my small body and I got my second wind: I even shivered with expected glory. I was only six, and small for my age, but my destiny was clear. Two narrow steps at a time: I could not stop. Faster and faster I moved. "You can't have me, priests." I took a swig of water from my shining canteen. It was hot and unsatisfying, but I ignored my thirst. I have never been more determined in my life. "I'm almost there, almost there," was my incessant chant.

When I squinted, I could see him. He was dressed in ceremonial array. His robe was gold and beaded like the rays of the Sun God. His neck was jeweled many times and his head was bedecked with kilos of bright feathers. In his right hand he carried a bowl. In his left he gripped the ominous knife. He stood with a cold, callous air, awaiting the arrival of the young maiden in the short summer shift with pleats around the bottom. He stretched out his hand to pull me forward. His eyes glinted with the ferocity of his mission. A rhythmical pounding interrupted the bleak silence. "But the drum players are at the bottom." Then I located the source of the sound: from deep inside the cavity of my chest I heard the beat of my heart. "I won't let you have it." But I felt as though it were already being ripped out. I looked into his scowling face. "No," I screamed.

The small rhombic summit was enveloped with light. I stood, shaking with exhaustion, but I had glory. I had not climbed the lesser pyramids, not those of the moon, nor the stars, nor the rain. I had climbed the Pyramid of the Sun. And I was not a victim. I had conquered the priest who beckoned me to his knife. I was his equal, not one of the servants climbing about the base.

I really do not like to look back into my childhood. I am glad I have finally emerged from that time; I cannot remember any other particularly happy incidents. But I am not hesitant to recreate that triumphant day in my sixth year of existence. Neither my small size, nor the stifling heat, nor the restrictive grownups, had hin-

dered me. I had not succumbed. I had reached the top with my own will, my own strength, my own courage.

But try as I may, I cannot remember the climb down.

BRENDA GOOD, *twelfth*
Lake Forest High School
Alva Lowey, teacher

Puissant

Deep in the forests of northern Canada there is a very special bear. In Canada there are many bears, but this one is very different from the rest. He is different for a couple of reasons. One is that he has his den very near a small village of French settlers. You see, a bear, in a way, picks what might be called "his" territory, and once he has chosen it, it isn't easy to drive him away. Don't misunderstand; a bear goes pretty much wherever he wants to go, but he usually returns *home* in between trips, to see if everything is under control.

In the early days when the settlers' grandfathers and grandmothers came to settle this area, this bear had given them nothing but trouble. One story even states that this bear knocked down an enire shed with one mighty sweep of his paw.

Another strange feature of this seven-foot grizzly was a large gash on his right, hind leg. No one knows where the scar came from, but there are many myths about it. One is an old Indian myth that says that the Sun God was angered and sent a lightning rod down to destroy the bear. The War God was supposed to have shielded him from almost the whole blow, except on his hind leg. Another story is a white man's myth. It claims that the wound comes from the devil, and whoever sees this scar is to be condemned to Hell for all eternity.

For these reasons neither the Indians who lived in the area, nor the French settlers would ever hunt down this beast.

The bear was named Puissant (Pu ee-Sahng) a French word meaning mighty and powerful. Puissant, like all other grizzlies, was huge and long-clawed. Grizzlies are fierce and cannot tolerate the presence of humans, but then, again, no one had ever made an effort to cross Puissant's path. Because of all the stories, everyone had overlooked the fact that maybe Puissant was really no different from any other grizzly, except for his scar; he just happened to be in the right place at the time. So he became the center of the settlers' and the Indians' imaginations.

Puissant is very old, his fur dry and brittle, and his joints swollen so that it is hard for him to do even the simplest of things, now.

In the small village of The Pas, trappers are busy loading their furs into their pick-up trucks. A few children play near-by, while inside the log buildings, their parents sell their goods to city people, who in turn go and sell them to stores in the city and sell them at twice the price.

One of the children, playing outside, is John Jaques. The boy is thirteen. He is dark-haired and has a dark complexion. He is the son of Jack and Lucia Jaques, the village's trading-post owners. John has lived all his life in The Pas and knows only what he has read in books about the outside world. He loves to explore and adventure. He has often ventured into the forest in search of animal tracks. John dreams of the day he can prove his bravery and hunt with his father. It is a big day in a young person's life in The Pas when he has trapped or hunted his first large animal. It's not that the people of The Pas go out and hunt just to kill. Meat is their main source of food. The furs are their main source of trade.

It is about five thirty on a warm summer's day. John rises and slips into his jeans and flannel shirt. He quietly walks outside and enjoys the sights, smells and sounds of the morning. Dew is all over the ground, and the sun is just barely lighting up the sky. The smell of sweet pines swells in his nostrils, and the morning birds have just started their song.

In his cave Puissant has just risen. He painfully walks out of his cave and greets the morning as he has a thousand times before. The forest floor is dewy and cool. It feels soothing against his rugged paws.

That morning John started out towards the woods for a walk. He was about a quarter of a mile from home when he came upon some deer tracks. He started to follow them and, before he knew it, he was at the creek which was about three miles from home.

John began to walk towards home when he thought, "Why should I go home? Now is my big chance to prove I'm a man. Boy! wait till I come back this afternoon with a big ole deer slung across my shoulders."

Just then he remembered that he had left his rifle on the porch earlier this morning. He thought a moment and then dashed towards home. Maybe if he hurried, he would be able to get the deer before it got too far away.

Suddenly, there before him, was a wolf, no, two wolves, no, a pack of wolves. John was shocked. He began to back up. He backed

up until he bumped into a tree. Then he was surrounded. Crazy thoughts ran through his head. He thought of making a dash for it, but soon realized that wolves would catch him in a moment. Then he thought of screaming for help, but feared it might scare them into attacking.

About twenty yards away Puissant was taking his morning rounds. He could hear the snarls of the wolves but paid little attention to them. Soon he reached the place of action. Puissant stood and studied the situation. Here before him were two of his greatest foes, a human and wolves. This angered Puissant, and he angrily stood on his hind legs and groaned.

At this John passed out. As if it wasn't enough to have a pack of wolves ready to eat you, but on top of that the meanest bear in this neck of the woods standing within six feet of you!

Puissant walked over to one of the wolves, and with a sweep of his paw the wolf lay on the ground, a bloody wreck. Now the wolves' attention was diverted from the boy to the bear. Usually the wolves would back down from a bear, but Puissant was outnumbered, plus he was old and weak. The wolves knew this and decided to take advantage of the situation. They surrounded Puissant and started snarling and moving in on him. Puissant was confused. There were so many wolves. Which one would he strike at first? He started taking mighty blows at their heads, and the wolves started sinking their knife-sharp teeth into Puissant's flesh. His side was ripped open, and his ears were two bloody messes. Puissant had killed five wolves with his merciless paws and another two with his iron teeth. The wolves started to back up, seeing clearly that they were fighting a losing battle. Soon they fled through the forest, defeated. In all, eight of the pack were dead.

Puissant made his way back to his den. His eyes were almost blinded by the blood dripping from his ears. This truly great bear had just won his final victory. There would be no more pain and no more blood or wolves. He had used his mighty and powerful paws and teeth for the last time. He dragged his body into the cave and collapsed. His last fling of life and energy had made him a legend to a boy named John and to all the people of The Pas.

CAROLYN KETCHAN, *eighth*
Ellis Junior High School, Elgin
Joan Bonnell, teacher

Gun Control and Crime

One of the few things on which anti-gun advocates agree is that their primary aim in legislating gun controls is to curb crime. Unfortunately, they refuse to hear the evidence proving that gun control has little effect on crime. Year after year New York City spends enormous sums for its notorious Sullivan Law, a law under which only one out of six criminals convicted of crimes involving weapons goes to jail.

Last year, researcher Dr. Allan Krug reported that firearms of all types are used in only 3.4 percent of the nation's serious crimes. In other words, as Krug put it, "If firearms were completely eliminated (which is impossible), and if no criminal substituted any other weapon for a firearm, the U.S. would still have 96.6 percent of its crime problem."

Pro-gun people, on the other hand, have long contended that crime can be curbed only by laws directed at the criminal, not at whatever tool he may choose to use, and by swift, hard-nosed enforcement of those laws by police and by the courts. First among pro-gun recommendations has been the imposition of irreducible, mandatory sentences against any person convicted of using a gun in the commission of a crime.

In 1975 the Florida legislature passed a law imposing three-year mandatory sentences for gun crimes. The Florida law is working. Armed robberies are down 38.5 percent; homicides with guns are down 21 percent; aggravated assaults with guns are down 14.5 percent; and chain-store robberies are down 30.4 percent. These figures show marked improvement over the 21 percent reported after the first few months following the law's enactment, and the gain is attributed to uniform enforcement and to an intensive publicity campaign (billboards, newspaper, radio and television announcements) warning that the use of a gun during the commission of a crime in Florida will get the felon "three years to life," depending on the seriousness of the offense committed.

Small wonder that with statistics like the aforementioned, mandatory sentencing for gun crimes is getting nationwide attention. Nearly a dozen states now have similar laws either in force or under legislative consideration. Arizona, with a five-year mandatory sentencing law, reports a 14 percent decline in armed robberies in the first months following the law's enactment.

Police are enthusiastic about the Florida law, pointing out that it requires two simple ingredients to insure its effectiveness: enforcement by the courts and public awareness that it will be en-

forced. Initially, certain Florida judges were accused of failing to impose the mandatory sentences in at least sixty-two cases. But the public outcry against this practice seems to have corrected that problem, and the "three years to life" publicity campaign has done the rest.

From the beginning the men of real stature in law enforcement have opposed anti-gun legislation. The national and state associations of enforcement officers have consistently voted down anti-gun proposals, as did most Massachusetts policemen and the Florida Sheriffs' Association, which supported the mandatory sentencing law and is now outspoken in praise of its success.

The evidence is in! It is time to make any crime committed with a gun a federal offense with severe sentences. Let us act on the evidence by legislating laws which would bypass our tedious court procedures and provide for the swift, just prosecution of criminals.

MARK HURLEY, *tenth*
Quincy Senior High I
Terry Sherer, teacher

Dream World

In spite of the twenty people who surround me as I sit in the classroom, I feel very much alone. I shift my eyes from the teacher to gaze out the window at the snow-covered forest which was once green. I seem to fall into a dream world remembering the autumn season with its leaves of many different colors falling slowly to the ground with every breeze. But now it is winter, and summer is yet to come. The once beautifully colored ground is now white. It sends me a feeling of wet and chill, creating a sense of loneliness. I remember the bright sunny orange and golden leaves. I also remember they are no longer with me. I will wait for this season to arrive again. For now I will wait as I sit among twenty people in the loneliness of the classroom.

RANDY WHITMAN, *seventh*
Northwood Junior High School, Highland Park
Joyce Hazelkorn, teacher

HONORABLE MENTION

Prose

AURORA: ROSARY
"Evening at 'Pops'" by Mary Ellen McLean (Louise Wright)

BERWYN: J. STERLING MORTON WEST
"The Beach House" by Kathy Kluge (Linda Czajka)

BLOOMINGTON: CENTRAL CATHOLIC
"Just Like the Birds" by Molly Wieland (Ed Heineman)

CHICAGO: SPALDING AND ST. BENEDICT
"The Daily Routine of My Grandfather" by Janis Cohen (Jeanne Heinen)
"Old Soldiers Never Die—Do They?" by Rich Lalich (Sister Joan Kaepplinger)

EVANSTON TOWNSHIP
"Bus Ride" by Julie Landau (Helen Diethrich)
"The Cat" by Naomi Gold (Katherine Mervis)
"Last Spring I Enrolled" by Elizabeth Otto (Malcolm Stern)
"Ntiki's Proof" by Jennifer Moss (Carl Hammer)

FLOSSMOOR: HOMEWOOD-FLOSSMOOR
"Stained Glass" by Karen Rosen (Michael Durkin)
"You're Not Listening" by Randy Kreger (Michael Durkin)

GLEN ELLYN: FOREST GLEN
"Is There Life on Earth?" by Ruth Schock (Rae Bidle)

GLENVIEW: GLENBROOK SOUTH
"An Old Fashioned Christmas" by Rosemarie Rauch (Peggy Forbes)

KENILWORTH: JOSEPH SEARS
"Our Cat Leo" by David Andrew (Audrey Brown)

LA GRANGE: LYONS TOWNSHIP
"The Doghouse" by Sara Larson (Mary Hohe)
"Friendly Strife" by Ann Marie Barry (Aldo Mungai)
"Playing the Silver Ball" by Carolyn Cosentino (John Wheeler)

LAKE FOREST COMMUNITY
"Such a Lonely Beauty" by Nancy Riley (Alva Lowey)

OAK PARK-RIVER FOREST
"A Long, Hot Walk in the Sun" by Dan Halibey (Douglas Shepherd)

PARK RIDGE: MAINE TOWNSHIP SOUTH
"The Black Sunrise" by Melissa Machon (S. Granzyk)
"Breaking Bonds" by David Walter Greising (Mike Deines)

PRAIRIE VIEW: ADLAI E. STEVENSON
"Leading Lady" by Lisa Haufschild (Dorothea Hain)
"Requiescant in Pace" by Tom Glauner (Dorothea Hain)

ROCKFORD: GUILFORD
"Jack P. Framingham, Engineer" by Paul Funk (James Applegate)
"The Lawn Ranger" by Rick Zwicky (Jeanne Claeys)
"Reflections in a Mirror, or, Nuns Go to the Bathroom, Too" by Ann Villinski (Patricia Davis)

SKOKIE: NILES TOWNSHIP NORTH
"Journal: December 24, 1862 to January 2, 1863" by Kenneth Meyers (John Staerk)

WILLOWBROOK: VILLA PARK
"Now Is the Time" by Maryanne Jeter (Jerry Bitts)

Preface to Poetry Selections

One of the most pleasing things about this year's poetry entries was that there were so many different selections. Schools from all areas in the state participated by sending 920 poems. This abundance of choices made our task richer. All poems were considered; we accepted every late entry because the snow storm interfered with submissions that would have been on time. We thank the young people who entered and hope they will all continue to grow as poets.

English Department
Illinois State University

Judging Committee: Janice Neuleib, Chairperson
Lucia Getsi
Richard Newby
L. Louese Pilch

Changing Planes

All that is left of me
is a chalk outline
hastily sketched on wet pavement
beneath my twenty-story headstone.
I am trapped in this 2-dimensional confinement
as I was in life.

I am survived by my poetry;
planar cross-sections of seventeen years.
All vain attempts to rise above arbitrary limits,
they contain the curves and twists of my emotions
flattened and hammered out
into paper thinness.

Any endeavor to express myself
was thwarted by the medium.
Lacking substance, my feelings made no impression.
How to communicate?
Myriad ideas, tangible and concrete in the mind
Became mere wraiths, haunting me with their ethereality,
when conveyed on paper.

How to make people understand?
In desperation, I committed the ultimate expression.
Revoking Euclid,
I sought realness in the parabolas of free flight.
Now I am the subject of two inches of newsprint,
the flat, wispish ghost
of another's pen.

DOUGLAS OTWELL, *eleventh*
Evanston Township High School
John Reque, teacher

Picasso

Conforming to a stool at Walgreen's counter,
Wearing a tacky black felt hat with a
Chalkboard green feather smashed onto it,
Sporting 5 wrist watches,
All pinging and humming and also tocking,
As in

"Pssst . . . hey buddy you wanna buy one?"
Having quite an enjoyable chat (with
himself)
Sits Picasso.
Or at least he thinks he is —
He signed his name on the bottom of his
Tab for coffee.
I know.
I saw it.

PAMELA HAYWARD, *twelfth*
J. Sterling Morton High School West, Berwyn
Patricia Geiser, teacher

So Sorry . . .

when I was younger —
i needed a dad.
not for doing those
fatherly things,
but just to have him for
the teachers,
(who thought everyone had
one),
just waiting at the office
to be notified that he had won:
"father of the year."
i needed a father for
a father daughter dinner . . .
(i took my teacher,)
where i stole the entertainment as:
mae west.
But, now i'm onstage for real,
and daddy's got the best seat in the house!
the last row of the center section,
a little to the left so the conductor's
head doesn't block his view.
i curtain-call to the lone applause.

LYNNE DUDEK, *twelfth*
J. Sterling Morton High School West, Berwyn
Patricia Geiser, teacher

Summer's Army

Sunburst dandelions
scattered among the fields
stand at attention
waiting for the sky to shout
its next command.
Finally, it comes:
"At ease!"
They bend back casually,
turning to chatter.
Moments fly by.
Then suddenly,
"Right face!"
In unison they turn
bowing to their leader.

JAN ALPERT, *eleventh*
Niles Township High School North, Skokie
Peter LaForge, teacher

Old Age

How old — old this Mr. Rappaport was! Purple stains were buried in the flesh of his nose, and the cartilage of his ear was twisted like a cabbage heart. Beyond remedy by glasses, his eyes were smoky and faded.
Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day*

He barely crawls along, thought Wilhelm. His pants are dropping off because he hasn't got enough flesh for them to stick to. He's almost blind and covered with spots. . . . this old man. . . .
Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day*

I've seen old age creep slowly up and silently attack.
Once old age has taken hold, there is no turning back.

Old age is a rogish prankster who desecrates aged flesh.
He twists and turns and tampers with what once was fair and fresh.

Old age is a hungry predator who thrives on people's minds.
He picks and paws and eats away until nothing's left behind.

He leaves his devoured victims as worthless as the weeds.
He's heartless, soulless, callous, insensitive to his deeds.

SUSAN BARRY, *twelfth*
Evanston Township High School
Curtis Crotty, teacher

Untitled

In the tunnel brightly glowing,
in the Forest of No Trees,
wanders Chantal, dark as morning
singing everything she sees.

Sing, Chantal, sing the water,
watch it flowing up the hill.
Sing, Chantal, sing forever.
If you don't, then no one will.

Now she stops beside the water,
sits beneath the cushion-trees,
making rainbows with her hands,
and weaving laughter tapestries.

Sing, Chantal, sing your pictures.
Fill the emptiness unknown.
Sing, Chantal, sing forever,
sitting in your world alone.

Where are all the other people?
Did they die or disappear?
Chantal doesn't sing the people,
so, of course, there are none here.

VALERIE HODGES, *eleventh*
Glenbard West High School, Glen Ellyn
Miss Dill, teacher

Traces

there are yet traces
of the ones here before us
before we moved in
apartment
(ill-fitting definition)
in the
cracked greyness
of the
medicine cabinet mirror
behind my own
dusty face
2 empty lipsticks
and 1 half-worn down
terminally frizzied
green toothbrush
a bawdy red nailpolish
clinging
to the sides of the bottle
a crumpled crest tube

mementos
and i wonder
had we left our own
for every
bobby pin
red hair
and juicy-fruit wrapper
that isn't mine
someone else
will find
my fuzzy blue slipper
cat hairs
and god knows what else
yes
people here before us
who washed dishes in the kitchen
had trouble with the toilet
listened to T.V.
people just like us
altho we never knew them
have not
totally left
somehow
i don't think they ever really will.

SUSAN PHILLIPS, *eleventh*
Niles Township High School North, Skokie
Peter La Forge, teacher

A Day with Twin Four Year Olds

They wake up at the crack of dawn
Then jump out of bed without a yawn
To wake their daddy to go do his job
While their mommy gives a little sob.

They yell, "Rise and shine, and please, make it fast!"
To their older sister who wants her dream to last.
They turn on the TV in the family room
And run and jump on chairs with a gigantic boom.
They watch the Captain until it's time to eat.
Then they come to the kitchen thumping their feet.
Most of their food goes on the floor;
That's one reason why they ask for more.
When they've finished they go and get dressed,
Giving their mommy a minute to rest.
They throw their pj's every which way,
Leaving them wherever they may lay.
They go and watch TV with a smile
Allowing their mom to do the chores for a while.
When finally one decides to play with a toy,
The other decides to annoy, annoy, ANNOY!
They pull and tug and shout at each other,
Until the referee comes disguised as their mother.
After a spanking and a little whine,
They're back at it before you can count to nine.
Then they start to settle down
Because it's time for Bozo the clown.
In half an hour it's time to eat again,
So they can grow into big strong men.
When they're finally finished eating,
They decide to hold a conspirators' meeting
To think of ways to act like tykes,
The ways they know their mommy dislikes.
They resolve to color their bedroom walls,
So they reach for their crayons without any stalls.
Then they run and jump and shout with glee
While their mom tries to figure out the mystery.
But before they can fulfill their dream,
Their mom appears with one loud scream,
"Drop those objects right away,
Or you'll be punished till you obey."
"OK, OK," the twins do shout
As they drop their crayons and begin to pout.
Just then their sister walks in the door,
And they rise and greet her from the floor.
She smiles and asks, "How was your day?"
As her mom looks at the twins in dismay.

"Oh, I see. Well, it's time to go
To do my homework with Mary Jo."
She turns to the door and says, "Goodbye,
And be good for Mom, please try."
After a quiet session of a minute or two
They succeed in finding something else to do.
One asks their mom, "Can we play a game?"
"Yes, but only if you remain tame."
Soon the playing board is tattered and torn,
But this great loss the twins don't mourn.
By this time their dad will arrive
And on his attention they will thrive.
"Dinner is ready. Come and eat,"
Announced their mother with a voice so sweet.
The twins go and wash their hands
Making noises like big brass bands.
After dinner, when all is fine,
The family watches TV till eight or nine.
Part of this time is occupied by fighting
Between the twins who clash like lightning.
Now it's time to get to their beds
To go to sleep, to lay down their heads.
They say their prayers and give a yawn,
For they'll be up tomorrow at the crack of dawn.

MAUREEN ANICHINI, *eighth*
Lincoln Junior High School, Mt. Prospect
Kathleen Bell, teacher

Illusions in the Dark

How heavy
that shapeless, empty mass of
logic that the Europeans created:
educate the wild barbarians
bring them culture
bring them industry
and besides, there's profit in it.

The White Man's Burden
a weight of the mind
the weight of gold and metals
it weighs on those who never had a burden
the law of mass defied.

Who asked for
the exile of others for their own gain,
an incipient people shaped in the European mold?
Our way of life makes us what we are; as with you,
Our wealth is not our only gold.

WENDY ZUCKERMAN, *tenth*
Evanston Township High School
David Foote, John Dunn, teachers

Untitled

My sister's daddy greets her with "Hello, kitten"
and a hug.
How saccharine.
My father greets me with "Ah, radical youth"
and nod of head.

The thread that runs between us
is worn and thin, now.
When I was twelve, it ran straight
and elastic,
seemingly shorter than now.

The thread that runs between us
sags under the weight of
bitter arguments, uncalled-for words.
It snapped a month ago,
too much twisting and tugging.
Mother picked up the two ends,
tied them back togther,
but she couldn't do much about
the knot.

The thread that runs between us
needs replacing.
I've tried, but I keep missing
the eye of the needle, and
when Father tried to help,
I pricked us both;
it was an accident, though
I didn't say so.
He stormed off,
leaving me all
tangled.
Mother had told me to wear
a thimble,
but I paid her no mind.

The thread that runs between us
is my sister's jumping rope.
Father sings for her as she jumps,
throwing me glance of petty triumph.
I slow her down since one end
is mine.
She, in turn,
makes my words turn
inside out.

She jumps . . .
He will always be "Daddy" to her,
"Father" to me,
as I have but few days
till the thread
snaps
beyond
repair.

STEPHANIE LEVY, *twelfth*
Kenwood Academy, Chicago
Alta Blakely, teacher

I Wish I Were Green

I wish I were green because I would probably be a Martian.
If I were a Martian, I could have antennas
And I could be invisible!
If I were a Martian I would own a flying saucer.
I would not have to go to school
Because I would be born Super-Smart!
If I were green I could trip people
And then I would pretend like I was a tree!

GLENN ANDRESS, *fifth*
Olive School, Arlington Heights
D. Kiel, teacher

In Remembrance

The stars cast shadows on the ground
making the old stool
look as if she were still there.
The wind made the chimes
sing for
her.
She was there
just yesterday
laughing at the worms
digging their way down
before the plump spring rain
could snatch them up again.
The pillars are painted
white peeling
reflecting her eroding face
evaporating with the
sunrise.
Nobody remembers her name now
but we all remember the
paint-peeled house and the stone well
with the yellow cup
rusted through to the middle,

A fuzzy image of a huge woman
passing out gingerbread cookies
hums in our minds.
Her small nose was bruised with
blueberry jam;
her face was white lace
with brown crumpled paper
peering out behind.
Her hair sat lightly on her head,
a feathertop,
the color of tarnished tinfoil.
Her ears were lion skins crinkled
from drying in the sun.
When she spoke, her lips quivered,
never daring to open;
they only cracked into a rusted orange smile,
when we played in the sandbox
that sat alongside
the house.
The sandbox lays quiet
tonight
in remembrance
of her.

JENNY SWANSON, *eighth*
Lincoln Junior High School, Mt. Prospect
Kathleen Bell, teacher

Bird Watching

Of all the people I envy the most —
those who have it, or came awful close —
bird watchers rank at the top of my list,
for I tried hard to be one and just up and missed.
My eyes are not only slightly myopic,
and on that simply quite obvious topic,
I used to hear comments from close and afar,
as I, bespectacled and binocular
tried to tell a nuthatch from a chickadee.
We hardly need birdlore, now do we?

To distinguish from cardinal or cockatoo,
or even from magpie or marabou,
I have never been able and now never will
unless the dumb birdies consent to stand still!
I would rush to look in my small birdie guide
and dutifully observe all the thousands inside.
But the bird in the treetop never did look
at all like its picture in my guide book.
Or if it once did, then its plumage had changed,
leaving me ignorant and slightly deranged.
There is nothing to me, so terribly obscure,
as orthinological literature!
So I gave up my searching for finches and loons,
Now I watch clock hands and oftimes the moon.
The infrequent sight of a reputable sparrow
will suddenly chill me to my very marrow.
Still, sometimes I glimpse in my wine or my gin,
the great Audubon that I ought-to-of-bin.

MARY ANN SCHRAN, *tenth*
University High School, Urbana
Diane McColley, teacher

The Deep

I don't think it's a mistake
That God stands above the sea
And bends over,
To see His image on the face of
Those depths.

I don't think it's a mistake
That the sea, worshiping below Him,
Moves continually
So mortals
Cannot be quite sure
Whose face they see there.

LAURA FEDERICO, *tenth*
Evanston Township High School
George Seidenbecker, teacher

Pop the Question

Yesterday —
in the park
i found
the balloon man.
His face
told me —
that he was
selling answers
this day only
in all different colors,
two for a quarter.
So like a fool,
i bought one,
But by the time
i got it home
and introduced it
to all my questions,
it popped!

JODI BEHR, *tenth*
Guilford High School, Rockford
Jeanne Claeys, teacher

invitation

Run,
over wind-swept fields
and through breathing winds
that carry an essence of Autumn,
over stretches of golden pasture,
for the world
opens itself to you
and aches
for the touch
of your bare footsteps
upon its tender meadows.

HJORDIS HUSA, *twelfth*
DeKalb High School
Mary Penson, teacher

The Wrinkled Things in Life

I love dried peaches
golden brown
wrinkled by the silly sun
as if to take their usefulness away.
But I like them more for their
lack of juice
and fuzz
and seed.

I cannot look a dried peach
in the eye
without seeing fall's dim sunlight
and expiring trees
and thinking of all the lost cemeteries
I will find
when the weeds and brush
and brambles
have joined summer's heat.

Dried peaches —
I love them more
than anyone can
know.

SUE HILLS, *twelfth*
Charleston High School
Nell Wiseman, teacher

Insecurity

More than a doubt,
Less than paranoia,
It chews and gnaws at innards,
Till they shrink and cringe at contact,
Drawing in
The outards.

Confidence crumbles,
The sword of offense
Transforming, welding into
Bars in the cage of defense.

It is secret, silent,
Slithering in every waking moment;
Dark, dangerous, demonic in sleep.
Terrorizing, freezing, killing,
It shadows over lives,
Lustily breeding in
Cowering minds.
It is children sowing the weed-seeds of
Unhappiness.

KATHY BUCHER, *eleventh*
Triad High School, St. Jacob
Janel McFarland, teacher

English

Words like *this* and *that* and *are*
Quite possibly are the best by far.
I am, you are, but not *is* they say,
You're not *teached,* you're *taught*
this special way.
Other animals tweet, croak, or grunt,
But man must perform his special stunt.

In English there are rules without reasons,
There is *chief,* not *cheef* or *cheif,* you see,
It is *i* before *e* except after *c.*
You also must remember, in the middle of December,
that "*Boughs,* not *bows* of holly are *rough*"
Is a sentence in English which tends to be tough.
So if you're considering English,
You must be easy pleasin',
Because English has rules without reason.

COLETTE ST. AUBIN, *ninth*
Glenbrook South High School, Glenview
Mary Mulligan, teacher

Sonnet I

As winter shrinks when spring's fresh face appears,
And wisps of cold fade quickly with the sun;
As smooth seas calm the sailor's darkest fears
With peaceful dreams when day is finally done;
As storms' wild furies rage with beauty rare,
And earthquakes shake the world with fierce delight;
As lightning roams the sky without a care,
And sends electric shock waves through the night;
So it is, when wrapped in your embrace;
You ease my mind and set my soul on fire.
Your tender touch and softly smiling face
Is all the world and all I could desire.
The love we share — unending and sublime —
Will last unchanging till the end of time.

KIERAN MAC CARTHY, *twelfth*
Glenbard South High School, Glen Ellyn
Gerry Craig, teacher

Think Spring!

I long so much
For the warmth of spring,
When children laugh
And birds do sing.
I love it when
I can feel the breeze,
And hear the wind
Rustle the trees.
I love to go wading
In the stream,
But then I come out
Of my silly old dream.
Then I see the snow
It's a wondrous thing,
All I can do, is
Just think spring!

ELLIE FOLSOM, *fifth*
Parkwood School, Hanover Park
R. J. Butcher, teacher

i said a baby

i said a baby
she said a division of cells
i said a flower
she said an organ of sire
i said a snowflake
she said a crystal of water
i said a sunset
she said a scattering of light
i said death
she said nothing

KATHRYN BRETSCHER, *twelfth*
Hinsdale Township High School South, Darien
Nancy Waite, teacher

Secrets in the Night

I enter the din
As a moonbeam shines thin
On the house and across the lawn.
The stars are my sight
When I turn out the lights,
And this world full of troubles is gone.

And in my repose,
Like Sunday night shows,
I observe from my white linen bed,
Ten thousand new faces
In exotic new places
Like a circus inside of my head.

The colors all mix
And do intricate tricks
In a jumbled, unruly commotion.
I am living in bliss
With my lover's sweet kiss
Which in turn is a deadly witch potion.

My heart beats on
With my consciousness gone,
And the riddles unfolding within.
The answers are there
In the midnight air
But to know them is somehow a sin.

SCOTT FISHEL, *twelfth*
Olympia High School, Stanford
Helen Smith, teacher

Exeunt

The sun, making her entrance hesitantly
through the dusty window panes,
Then more and more confidently assuming
her role,
Illuminates with golden spotlights
the abandoned
room.

Dark, wilting roses bow their heads
to the pale rays of light, still
glorious in a haunting beauty.
Forgotten false eyelashes left inadvertently
on the sink wink at
the sun and welcome the morning.
The perfume of perspiration, make-up
and menthol-lyptus permeates
the air, blending subtly with
the odor of the decaying roses.
The pink, apologetic smear on the
wall where some lipstick-covered
hand accidentally touched,
accents the graphite inscription
of a blossoming romance . . .

But the glitter and glamour fade
quickly, for all this,
Along with the laughter and the
butterflies,
Will only be swept up callously
by maintenance men in the morning,
Leaving behind silent memories and
the sun.

KATHLEEN DODSON, *eleventh*
Evanston Township High School
Robert Roth, teacher

Mirror

Both of us see the world
Through my looking glass;
We shall see the future
By remembering the past.

I am me,
Always me, yet
Just a reflection
Of what I see.

I have no mind,
I have no heart,
I am only glass
Which sets me apart.

You are you,
Always you, but
Your reflection
Is of what you do.

You have a will,
You have a mind,
You have a heart,
Each one of a kind.

LAURA LOGSDON, *ninth*
Harrisburg High School
Lynda Clemmons, teacher

Untitled

Confetti whirled in spirals
to the sky.
A silent echo
of the cheering crowd.

VALERIE HODGES, *eleventh*
Glenbard West High School, Glen Ellyn
Miss Dill, teacher

War of the Fields

The blade of grass stands:
A soldier at attention,
Until the breeze fires.

JEANNE TOMLIN, *eighth*
Highland Junior High School, Libertyville
Jim McCauley, teacher

The Waitress

The little boy comes to me and says he is glad
I am here because we can talk
And I am enchanted
And so we talk of school and TV and people.
And I tell him stories of sad and funny and
scary things that I have heard told be-
fore or that I invent as I go along.
And he says I am a "nice lady" because
I don't "talk down" to him.
And I tell him another story and feel
very young.
But then the people come — young, old, grumbling,
laughing, striding, hobbling, running
And there is no time for the little boy.
And tables are set, soup is served, salad
eaten, platters brought, tables cleared
and reset for other faceless families.

And I smile when I seat them and nod
and placate and say goodnight.
And they hover along the walls and the bar.
And they stand and they slouch
And they drink and they laugh
And the smoke screens their faces and the
jukebox their voices.
And I play a game of tic-tac-toe
with the little boy as I wait for the
tables to clear,
But they frown and I stop, guiltily, and
give him some paper and he sits down to draw.
And the busboys clean like machines
And the waitresses grumble
And the people corner me and complain because
they are hungry and there is nowhere
to sit and because there is no one
else to complain to.
And I begin not to see them,
And my smile is automatic,
And the jukebox blares,
And the dishes clatter,
And my head aches,
And the people pour through the doors,
And I no longer write names in my book
but descriptions — "fat," "ugly,"
"three bratty kids"
And I feel better as I smile and
seat them.
Then the crowd dwindles, and I remember
the pleasant people and forget the
others
And I return to the little boy who is
hungry because he has not yet eaten
And so his parents order a table in the bar
And the soup comes and he tells them and
they say they will be there soon
And their soup cools and their meal comes
and he eats alone as they talk
and they laugh and they drink,
And when they come, he is half-done and
when they leave, he has not yet finished.

And the little boy asks his father for a
half-dollar
And his father reaches into his back pocket
and hands it to him without looking.
And the little boy punches five songs on the
jukebox and mouths all the words because
he has heard them all before — the old,
the new, the popular, the once-popular, the
unpopular.
Then he watches the people at the bar who
sit and stand and lean, who sip and
swirl and guzzle the drinks in their
hands.
And we talk a while longer until his eyes
are red from the smoke and the
drowsiness that falls softly like a blanket.
And he runs to his mother and says he
is tired,
And so she rolls his jacket into a ball,
places it on the bar, hoists him up
on a bar stool and tells him to
lay down his head.
But he flees to a dark corner and smothers
his head in the folds of his jacket
And he calls, "Mommy, come sit by me."
And she comes and parts his hair
tenderly, but she does not stay.
And the people shake their heads
and think of the small children
that were once theirs,
And the young people shake their heads
and think of the small children
that will one day be theirs
And the last of the families are leaving
And the dining room is black,
And only the men and women clus-
tered around the bar remain.
And the waitresses smoke and talk and say
I am a fool for "baby-sitting without
pay."
And I think of how sometimes it is
much better to be a fool than to be
wise,

But the words sound sophomoric to my
inner ear, so I do not say them aloud.
And I resolve not to think and I try to
look at the full moon outside, but the
block windows of the tavern distort it.
And they say, "Don't you see?"
And I say that I do, although I do not.
And they say I am a fool and that I
have learned too much from books
and that I have to learn about
people or I'll be taken advantage of.
And I say, "Perhaps," because it is
easier that way.
And they say that next week I should ignore
him or his parents will expect me to
"baby-sit" every week.
And I say, "I'll think about it." [Although
I know I won't] because it is
easier that way.
And they think they have taught me a
great lesson of life and do not know
how poor a student I am.
And I leave soon and he is sleeping so
I do not say good-night and his
parents are still talking so I do not
say good-night.
Then outside, where the moon is large
and round in the clear sky, I think
of what the waitresses had said
and how they laughed.
And I know the little boy's family
is not my affair,
And I know I do not know why they
do what they do and perhaps that
is just as well.
And I know the little boy will be
back next week, and we will
talk again.

ELIZABETH MERRICK, *eleventh*
Lyons Township High School, LaGrange
Aldo Mungai, teacher

HONORABLE MENTION

Poetry

BERWYN: J. STERLING MORTON WEST
"Billy Maly Always" by George Spiros (W. Ritis)

CHICAGO: MARIA
"Adagio in Color" by Asta Spurgis (Sister Henrietta)

DES PLAINES: MAINE TOWNSHIP WEST
"Mother" by Kevin Marquette (Mariann Guyon)

EVANSTON TOWNSHIP
"It Rained Cats and Dogs" by Joe Lease (Malcolm Stern)

GLENVIEW: GLENBROOK SOUTH
"Threat" by Liza Arnold (David Mullaly)

NORMAL: UNIVERSITY HIGH
"Shadow-black Man" by Kathy Whitcomb (Ms. Pilch)

PARK RIDGE: MAINE TOWNSHIP SOUTH
"The Farm Pickup" by Herbert Baumann (M. Deines)

ROCKFORD: GUILFORD
"The Canterbird Tales" by Kelly Oswald (Doral Moorman)
"The Wife of House's Tale" by Roy Kersting (Doral Moorman)

SKOKIE: NILES TOWNSHIP EAST AND NILES TOWNSHIP NORTH
"The Unicorns' Shrine" by Jami Lieder (Verniel Lundquist)
"Summer School" and "Restaurant" by Susan Phillips (Peter LaForge)

SOUTH ELGIN: WILLARD SCHOOL
"Grizzly" by Kristin Johnson (Ms. Gudeman)

URBANA: UNIVERSITY HIGH
"Garbage Disposal" by Julie Stenzel (Charlene Tibbetts)